



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Glacier National Park  
International Peace Park  
Biosphere Reserve  
World Heritage Site

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## Glacier National Park News Release

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For Immediate Release

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### Update on Glacier National Park Fire Status

*As of 4:00 P.M., July 18, 2003*

WEST GLACIER, MONT. – In the early morning hours of Wednesday, July 16, an intense lightning storm started several fires in the park, and in the neighboring Flathead National Forest.

The Continental Creek Fire was detected during aerial reconnaissance at 4:30 P.M. today. This fire is estimated to be 10 acres and is located on West Flattop Mountain. It is currently being flown to verify size and location.

A modified suppression strategy is being used on three fires currently active in the park (Wolf Gun, Paul Bunyan, and Mt. Edwards). This strategy means that natural barriers to fire expansion will be used to contain the fires. Natural barriers include rock, ice and areas burned in prior-year fires. These fires are being closely monitored and will be held within pre-established boundaries. As the fire reaches established trigger points, management actions will include more direct suppression activities including the use of hand-lines, burn-out (fighting fire with fire) and water delivery to maintain the fire within established perimeters.

The Wolf Gun Fire, burning in the Anaconda Drainage, is estimated at 40 acres. It is currently putting up smoke that is visible from Hwy 2 in West Glacier and may be visible from the North Fork Road. This fire is being managed with a modified suppression strategy, using natural barriers to contain the fire, in this case areas that burned in prior fires.

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The Paul Bunyan Fire was discovered yesterday by aerial reconnaissance. It is estimated at 20 acres. The fire is located ¼ mile from Dutch Lake, below the Paul Bunyan Cabin rock formation. This fire is visible from Hwy 2, and will be monitored by lookouts and aerial observation. This fire is being managed as a modified suppression fire, using natural barriers to contain the fire, in this case, rocky areas above the fire. The fire is located between several drainages burned in prior-year fires, including the Moose fire of 2001.

The Mt. Edwards Fire is less than .10 acres in size and is burning in steep, rocky terrain. This fire is being monitored by aerial observation. The fire is being managed with a modified suppression strategy using the rocky terrain as a natural barrier to contain the fire.

There are no structures or other resources threatened in these remote areas of the park. In making the decision to manage these fires with a modified suppression strategy, managers consider firefighter safety, values at risk in advance of the fire, the impacts to natural resources due to the use of mechanized tools in comparison to using natural barriers, and the high costs associated with staffing these remote fires.

Three small (less than a tenth of an acre) fires on Howe Ridge have been suppressed by Glacier National Park and Flathead National Forest Firefighters, and are currently in patrol status.

Two observed fire starts reported by Swiftcurrent Lookout, Heavens Peak I and II, both in the basin to the north of Heavens Peak, have not shown any activity since their detection, and the areas will be watched carefully for any sign of activity.

Fire Danger is high in Glacier National Park. We are currently experiencing record-breaking indicators for dryness in the vegetation. The weather forecast is calling for continued hot and dry weather.

Visitors are reminded to use caution and extinguish all cigarettes when smoking, and are reminded that campfires are permitted only in designated campgrounds in established fire rings.

Current fire information is available at:  
<http://www.nps.gov/glac/resources/fires.htm>

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